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 Date **10 OCT 91**

A Daughter's Story: CIA's Casey Told Truth

By Bernadette Casey Smith

WILL SOMEONE PLEASE tell me who told Bill Casey of the diversion of funds from the Iranian arms deal to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters (the contras)?

My husband and I were staying at my parents' home in Virginia on Nov. 25, 1986, when then-Attorney General Edwin Meese came at dawn to give Dad the complete Iran-contra story that he had heard from Lt. Col. Oliver North. Meese had briefed President Ronald Reagan concerning these facts the evening before, and then-White House chief of staff Donald Regan called

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and alerted my father to the situation.

My husband Owen Smith made coffee for them. Owen had been associated with my father for some 20 years before we were married, in his law firm, in politics, as a friend and confidant. I am an only child who had a very close personal friendship with both my father and mother. My father was my parent and pal.

After that early morning meeting, it was, and is, my husband's and my firm belief that Bill Casey heard

for the first time the details of what is now called the Iran-contra story.

This summer we spoke with Ed Meese, who still believes that Bill Casey did not have knowledge of the diversion of funds from the Iranian arms deals prior to his conversations with Regan and Meese on Nov. 24 and Nov. 25, 1986. The sale of arms to Iran was obviously known to the officials involved and was the subject of an official "finding" signed by Reagan. The diversion of the profits from the Iranian arms deals to the contras was a closely kept secret.

The only person who fingered Bill Casey as the mastermind behind the diversion was Oliver North and he did so only after Casey was dead. That was

approximately six months after North disclosed his involvement in the Iran-contra affair to the attorney general — at the time, he never mentioned Bill Casey — and six months after the early morning meeting, at which my father was shocked by the revelations presented by Meese.

To date no one else has spoken of an earlier disclosure to Casey.

It is my belief that Bill Casey honored the Boland amendment. He would not be involved in the diversion of funds because first and foremost, he was a lawyer with a deep respect for the law.

During the recent confirmation hearings on Robert Gates' nomination to be Central Intelligence Agency director, a lot has been taken as fact by the senators concerning Bill Casey.

Granted, my father was a tough taskmaster. He wanted the CIA to be the best it could be and thought it was the best. He was a genius at asking the tough questions. Bill Casey had a brilliant and open mind. His mind could be changed, but you had to have the facts to do it, not just wishful thinking.

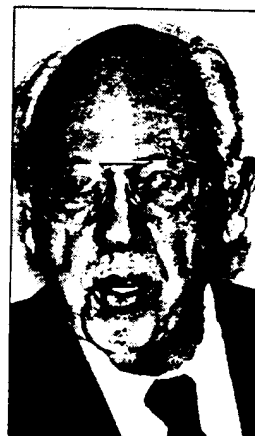
Indeed, I believe it was the tough stance that the Reagan administration took towards the Soviet Union that pressured the world to change and gave all humanity the chance for greater freedoms.

You see, the fall of communism was Bill Casey's ultimate goal. Thanks, Dad.



Bernadette Casey Smith is the daughter of the late Central Intelligence Agency director William Casey. She lives in Laurel Hollow.

POINT OF VIEW



UPI Photo

Casey in 1986.